



B330, Destined for Mars (Embargoed until: Sept. 12, 2019 11:30 am PT)

Thursday, September 12, 2019

This week Bigelow Aerospace has the privilege of hosting NASA for a two weeklong ground test of the B330 under the NextSTEP Phase 2 program. Shown here is an all steel testing unit (Mars Transporter Testing Unit).

The B330 is an autonomous, expandable independent space station that gets to space in a single launch. This large space station can accommodate four people indefinitely and five people for many months. Equipped with two galleys, two toilets, enormous cargo space and two dissimilar propulsion systems this is the ideal habitat for a long duration space mission. The first B330 can be built in 42 months upon receiving authority to proceed. The second B330 can be built within 28 months of the first, and the third B330 could be built within 22 months of the second.

The ground test is an important milestone for Bigelow Aerospace and B330. We are hosting over 60 NASA engineers, test leads and support staff as well as eight astronauts. In contrast to the other NextSTEP Phase 2 participants, we chose to keep our ground units at our facility so we could continue to develop and test. We also have many units that are too large and complex to feasibly transport back and forth.

The B330 has evolved from NASA heritage technology from the Transhab program. Expandable habitat technology was created from the Transhab program with the purpose of taking humans to Mars. This is important. In deep space, expandable structures have the potential to provide better protection against secondary radiation than traditional aluminum structures. The total effects of secondary radiation on humans are still unknown, but have the potential to be very serious. Cancer is not the only big worry.

It is important to listen to what President Trump has been saying about Mars. The way to Mars is to the Moon. The way to the Moon is through the Gateway.

The B330 is an exploration destined space station, and we are excited about its future.

Robert Bigelow

